

New CMC takes helm during uncertain times

First actions as 33rd commandant include sending Marines to liberate Iraqi people

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From the deployment of 67 percent of the Marine Corps’ operating forces to Iraq in January, to the signing of the launch order by President George W. Bush on March 19 that marked the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom, to bringing the last major bastion of the Hussein regime under coalition control on April 14, this year has been a year of heightened responsibility and sacrifice for the Marine Corps.

Amidst the turmoil and conflict, a new face of leadership took the helm of the Corps, ready to lead Marines towards victory and excellence in defending our nation’s freedom.

On Jan. 13, Gen. Michael W. Hagee became the 33rd Marine Corps

Commandant, just as thousands of troops were preparing for battle with Iraq.

Prior to assuming the office of commandant, Gen. Hagee’s past assignments included: commanding an infantry platoon and a company in combat in Vietnam; commanding a battalion at Camp Lejeune, N.C., the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, and the 1st Marine Division at Camp Pendleton.

General Hagee, 58, was appointed as the 33rd Commandant of the Marine Corps in a tradition-rich ceremony at the U.S. Naval Academy, where he started his career upon graduating in 1968.

The day he took command, Gen. Hagee was somber at the prospect of war, yet confident in his Marines’ abilities to get the job done.

“No one doubts that when Marines



Sgt. Colin Wyers
General Michael W. Hagee, commandant of the Marine Corps, speaks to Marines, sailors and soldiers of the First Marine Expeditionary Force in the Camp Babylon, Iraq, amphitheater June 17.

arrive they are ready to fight, and we are going to win,” he said.

As Operation Iraqi Freedom took its course and Gen. Hagee was getting used to his new position in the Marine Corps’ top post, the professionalism and motivation of the Marine Corps never wavered. The Marines who got the opportunity to